A SERVANT OF THE CHURCH by Al Diestelkamp

The apostle Paul highly commended a Christian named Phoebe, referring to her as “a servant of the church in Cenchrea” (Rom. 16:1). His urging of the brethren in Rome to “receive her in the Lord” and to “assist her” (v. 2) suggests that she had some needs while away from home.

While we don’t know the specifics of her needs, I want to emphasize what a blessing it was for Paul to describe her as a servant of her local congregation. This serves as a challenge for each of us to become actively involved in a local church so that we, too, may be recognized as servants of that congregation.

All Christians are called to be servants of Christ (Col. 3:24) and, therefore, should be servants of His universal church. However, one cannot genuinely claim loyalty and service to the body of Christ while neglecting wholehearted service within a local congregation of believers when possible.

Every local congregation needs Christians who are willing to actively participate in its work. While this includes faithfully attending and engaging in assembled worship, this does not encompass the entirety of our service. We must seek out ways to “through love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).

In our modern world which offers easy travel, many Christians have various options for where to worship. The temptation is to look for a congregation that best serves them and their personal needs. However, wouldn’t it be better to look for where we can best serve others? After all, the One we profess to follow “did not come to be served, but to serve” (Mk. 10:45).